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6/26/66

Mr. H. Verb.
922A Fulton St.,
San Francisco, Calif. 94117

Dear Mr. Verb,

Many thanks for your long letter of the 22nd., which I shall hurriedly address, at least in part, as much as to-be-interrupted time today permits. I drove home yesterday morning right from an all-night bash on the Long John Nebel Show on the NY NBC station, which covers a large part of the country. While there has been no time for mail, I've had several phone calls, from as far away as Miami, with only favorable comment. This was true also the many telegrams that reached the studio during the broadcast. All were favorable. The effect is yet to be measured. I hope it will be good, and I do expect this. What a stacked deck they gave me! Kevin O'Dougherty, an official of the right-of Goldwater New York Conservative Party, allegedly a lawyer (of which there was no reflection during his part of my interrogation or in his lengthy, befuddled and I think almost insane commentary), and Victor Laski, a refugee from some part of the left, I presume.

The very irresponsibility of these people, their conspicuously bad manners and their congenital proclivity for confusing their wild prejudices with fact were a boon. As I believe the program went over the air, I established every point I wanted to make despite their effort to prevent it. It got to the point where I was openly needling them, and when they degenerated into unrelated redbaiting I just sat back in silence, afraid any more fact would only overwhelm the listener. The program just petered out on this note, leaving me with an abundance of fresh material for any similar ones that might and can be offered...Numerous complaints of their effort to silence me reached the studio while I was there, a fitting touch for this subject, and on the air I emphasized this at every opportunity, even though it was obvious in context.

There will be a very dishonest attack on the Epstein book (which is quite vulnerable) in the coming issue of Look. Nobel gave me a copy and I have written Look in Epstein's defence and challenging them to give me the opportunity for a full rebuttal, from the record alone. They'll probably reject it. There will be not unfavorable reviews in the NY Times of the 3rd, mostly an expression of sympathy with the Commission and of the rest most on Epstein, for they cannot address mine. The important thing right now this review has: my address, so people can write for copies, and the acknowledgment that WHITEWASH is both painstaking and overwhelming. I have as yet no real way of measuring sales, but I know that there has been some distribution to NY bookstores.

I have no means of writing all the Calif. people working on this subject, so as you are in touch with them, you may convey this. Other reviews are pending. Epstein, who has (and should, for he'll be torn apart) has rejected all requests for public appearances save this coming Friday on the Today show, where Viking apparently insisted he go through with it.

Your reference to the "original" autopsy report makes me wonder what people, including

Epstein, are really talking about. I have no reason to doubt that the handwritten copy I used is the oldest existing copy. There is no reason of which I'm aware (and if there is, I'd like to know it) to believe that after 11/24/68 there was a different version of the autopsy drafted. This does contradict the Report. It is also public. How is Robert Kennedy supposedly collecting this kind of information, if you know or can find out, and through whom? Also why? I have no reason to doubt these rumors that I often hear, but no means of authenticating them. But they can be of vast significance.

Ferlinghetti is right in complaining the price of WHITEMASH is too high, but wrong if he thinks it can be any lower. If I sell this entire edition, aside from the very large number I have had to give to the press, I'll just about pay its cost alone, and he should be able to understand this from his own knowledge. Aside from this considerable cost, all as of this moment additional and considerable debt, I have the equivalent of at least \$50,000 invested in WHITEMASH. I'd like to be able to get some of it back, so I can pay the additional debts it required and to have a little to live on and finance my continuing work, which is entirely without any kind of subsidy or assistance from any source, save for the good people who are trying to help with the success of the book. Ferlinghetti can get and handle the book on what is called a "protected" basis, that is, he can return for full credit what he does not sell. Experience shows the cost is not prohibitive and that the book, despite its cost and format, does sell. There is now a west-coast distributor, Raymar, at Menloville, who have stocked 500 copies, in itself a commercial refutation of Ferlinghetti's fears. I hope he will at least handle the book. There it has been merely offered it has sold, but where the offer has been accompanied by a window display, etc., it has sold very well indeed. One store in Washington, to which I had given 130 on consignment, last week offered to pay for all of them now so I can give the printer some money because they have no doubt now that they'll sell all of them. At a University, with the school out of session, the bookstore sold so many I have as a result been invited to address a faculty-student meeting. One of the more important bookstores, Saville, one of those from whose sales Book Week computes its list of best sellers, offered to ask Viking to distribute WHITEMASH as a companion to INQUEST, an offer I declined. Five major distributors now handle WHITEMASH. I hope Mr. Ferlinghetti will realize that if I sell all my copies at a loss I accomplish nothing. In any event, thanks for your efforts and those of others. Any bookstore that wants the book can get it from Raymar, under regular commercial terms, and they and Ferlinghetti know this can be profitable to them.

With this commercial distribution arranged for the west coast, and because what in the trade is called "protected" is virtually the same as "consignment", I do not feel it is honorable of me to ship direct to any bookstore in Raymar's territory, even though the return to me would be greater.

Your reference to errors is correct. Both were the result of haste when the first printer broke his contract, destroyed the plates and in other ways was less than helpful. I have found two or three others, none serious, that I'll correct if there is another edition. If you find any more errors, please let me know immediately.

The Epstein book is and has been out, since June 6, as a matter of fact, for the publicity I arranged had the effect of launching it in an effort to subliminate my book. I have written the LA Times about their story, which makes no reference to WHITEMASH (actually a 1965 book) and if anything appears I'd appreciate a copy.

I'm glad to get Jones' address. I'll get the book. I did know of the deaths and of other strange happenings, without details on most. Your point on the watchband is interesting, but as of this moment, despite the Commission's mishandling, I'm inclined to think that could have been Lovelady, although I have no doubt Oswald was not at that moment on the sixth floor. I doubt if he'd have gone up for a coke after he had seen the President assassinated....The exact frame of the Zapruder film that coincides

Shot
with the Altgens picture is 255. This is the opinion of Shaneyfelt, and my own earlier opinion was, as I recall only about two frames earlier. He should be right. The fact that the windshield in it appears to be intact merely strengthens the belief that a head fragment caused the damage to it. I rather doubt that a bullet (which this could not have been) smashing through the windshield could have injured either. I believe the front bullet would have had to have a higher trajectory, or one more to the side....I am aware that Oswald may have been left-handed, but there is no evidence he shot that way, aside from testimony that the sight was mounted for a left-handed person, if that is evidence. But because of this testimony, it would have been to the Commission's interest to have him a left-handed shooter, for it would have been consistent rather than inconsistent with this testimony and would have crowded him less....The time of Oswald arrest, as I recall, was fairly accurately reported. The time of entrance was not....The editing of Oswald's "patay" remarks is true, I have no doubt. I've heard it before. I have not yet come across any public source quoting it, and would like to have it.

I'm continuing my work, as I can and when I can, and the material is, I believe, quite sensational. I think, however, until it is ready for publication I'd best say nothing about it. I've got close to 20,000 words done.

I'd be happy to go to California if my expenses were paid. Even if WHITEWASH takes off and does well, our debts are such I'll be broke for quite a while. We have been without income for 2 1/2 years. There is one other thing I'd also want, and that is a recording of everything I say, especially if there are questions answered. I hope you can see this is necessary to prevent distortion or worse and to protect against it.

Thanks for your offer of assistance. At the moment, more than anything else I believe distribution of WHITEWASH is important, for the other current writings have an inherently bad line and are inaccurate, ultimately playing into the hands of the right. Epstein and Lane point at Earl Warren as the goat, and Lane has confirmed this in writing to me. It is in Trevor-Roper's int education, too. Sauvage is a person of high integrity, from my two phone contacts with him. His book will be much less complete, and from his writings in the New Leader will have nothing new.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg